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**JOINT RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE THE PEACE PROCESS,
A RETURN TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION IN CHECHNYA AND THE NORTHERN
CAUCASUS REGION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

WHEREAS, two profoundly violent civil wars have taken place in Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region of the Russian Federation since the collapse of the Soviet Union; and

WHEREAS, these wars, which took place from 1994 to 1996 and from 1999 to 2007, have resulted in the death of up to 250,000 people, which is almost one-quarter of the population of Chechnya, and the dislocation of up to 500,000 people, or almost half the population of Chechnya; and

WHEREAS, the most violent aggression has fallen on innocent families and refugees in Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region through the activities of the Russian military and security forces, and ethnic discrimination is suffered by Chechen, Ingush and other Caucasus peoples throughout the Russian Federation; and

WHEREAS, various citizens, scholars, students and residents in the State of Maine are involved in civic, cultural, social and business exchanges with Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region in the Russian Federation; now, therefore, be it

That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-third Legislature now assembled in the First Special Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to urge the government of the Russian Federation to honestly and transparently engage in creating a just peace in Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region; and be it further

That we also urge the encouragement of a return to democratically elected officials and institutions in Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region, and we urge the encouragement of civic and social links between Chechnya, Ingushetia and the Northern Caucasus Region, the Russian Federation and the rest of the world.